

Amendments to the Claims

1-12. (canceled)

13. (currently amended) ~~The process of claim 7~~ A process comprising:

- (a) providing a shell comprising a ceramic fibrous refractory material, wherein the shell ~~comprises~~ includes an interior area and a top end, wherein the top end comprises the an opening;
- (b) inserting a fluxing material suitable for use in casting molten metal through the opening and into the interior area of the shell, ~~wherein step (a) includes~~ including pouring the fluxing material in liquid form downward through the opening;
- (c) securing the fluxing material to the shell.

14. (previously presented) A process comprising:

- (a) inserting a fluxing material into the interior area of a shell, wherein the fluxing material is suitable for use in molten metal flux treatment, wherein the shell comprises a heat insulating fibrous refractory material, wherein the shell has a higher melting temperature than the fluxing material, wherein the shell comprises a single opening enabling passage therethrough to the interior area, and wherein the inserting includes pouring the fluxing material in liquid form through the opening;
- (b) subsequent to step (a), securing the fluxing material to the shell, wherein the opening enables passage therethrough to secured fluxing material, wherein the securing includes solidifying fluxing material in the interior area, and wherein solidified fluxing material is prevented from passing through the opening.

15. (previously presented) The process of claim 14 wherein the opening has a diameter, wherein step (b) includes integrally connecting fluxing material to the shell, and wherein step (b) further includes providing a solidified fluxing material having a greater diameter than the diameter of the opening.

16. (previously presented) The process of claim 14 wherein the interior area is tapered, wherein step (b) includes forming a tapered solidified fluxing material.

17. (previously presented) The process of claim 14 and further comprising:

- (c) exposing the shell with the fluxing material therein to molten metal, wherein only the fluxing material adjacent the opening is exposed to the molten metal.

18. (previously presented) The process of claim 14 and further comprising:

- (c) exposing the shell with the fluxing material therein to molten metal, wherein the fluxing material has a lower melting temperature than the molten metal, and wherein the shell has higher melting temperature than the molten metal.

19. (previously presented) The process of claim 18 wherein step (c) includes exposing the shell with the fluxing material therein to molten metal for at least a predetermined time period, wherein substantially all of the fluxing material is released from the shell via the opening to the molten metal during the predetermined time period.

20. (previously presented) The process of claim 14 wherein the shell comprises a top end, wherein the top end comprises the opening, wherein step (a) includes pouring the fluxing material in liquid form downward through the opening.